

Review/Television

New Round of Shows on J. F. K.'s Life

By JOHN J. O'CONNOR

The 30th anniversary of the John F. Kennedy assassination on Nov. 22 is bringing forth yet further replays of images seared in the national consciousness: the shocking scene at Dealey Plaza in Dallas; the bizarre gunning down of the accused assassin; the small boy saluting his father's funeral cortege. The reverberations remain powerful. And, of course, television is ready with a new batch of documentaries and dramas to ride the emotional coattails.

Among the John F. Kennedy biographies on tap are "Jack," a CBS documentary on Wednesday and, beginning Sunday on ABC, "J. F. K.: Restless Youth," a mini-series dramatization of the Nigel Hamilton book that angered the Kennedy family when it was published last year. More to the immediate point here: two productions dealing with the accused assassin. An indirect approach is taken, tonight on NBC, in "Fatal Deception: Mrs. Lee Harvey Oswald." Tomorrow on many PBS stations, a three-hour "Frontline" documentary, produced in association with the BBC, attempts to answer the still-lingering question, "Who Was Lee Harvey Oswald?"

Filmed on location in Dallas and Russia, "Fatal Deception" allows

Fatal Deception Mrs. Lee Harvey Oswald

NBC, tonight at 9; 8 central time

Written and co-produced by Steve Bello and directed by Robert Dornhelm. Music by Harald Kloser. Director of photography, Yuri Neyman; production designer, Brian Eatwell; producer, Paul Pompian. A David L. Wolper Production in association with Bernard Sofronski and Warner Brothers Television Distribution. Executive producers, Mr. Sofronski and Mr. Wolper.

Marina Oswald.....	Helena Bonham Carter
Lee Harvey Oswald.....	Frank Whaley
David Lifton.....	Robert Picardo
George de Moreschildt.....	Bill Bolender
Kenneth Porter.....	Brandon Smith
Lisa Renee Wilson.....	Rachel Porter
Deborah Dawn Slaboda.....	June Porter
Lubya.....	Ingeborga Dapkunaite
Uncle.....	Vladimir Ilyn
Aunt.....	Galina Polskih
Ruth Paine.....	Quenby Bakke
Robert Oswald.....	Robert Reed

Marina Oswald Porter to, NBC says, "tell her story for the first time." Actually, she has described her courtship in Minsk and the increasingly stormy relationship with the abusive Oswald in some detail through various articles and interviews over the years. This movie, with a bow to Oliver Stone's "J. F. K.," reveals how she gradually came to join the ranks of conspiracy theorists.

Marina, played by Helena Bonham

Frontline Who Was Lee Harvey Oswald?

PBS, tomorrow night at 9
(check local listings)

Written, produced and directed by William Cran and Ben Loeterman. Photography by Mark Molesworth and Bob Perrin. Co-producer, Stephanie Tepper; production assistants, Miri Navasky and Kay Stanley; production manager, Kate Leonard-Morgan; associate producer, Christopher Buchanan; senior producers, Michael Sullivan and Mr. Cran; reporters, Scott Malone and Gus Russo.

Carter ("Howards End"), is only 22 when Oswald (Frank Whaley) bursts onto world headlines. Living in this country only on a visa, she has two children and can barely speak English. A Dallas policeman, looking for Oswald's motive, suggests to her that maybe he wanted "to leave his mark on history." She uses the same phrase before the Warren Commission investigating the assassination. Asked during the hearings if she has concluded that her husband did it, she says, "From the evidence, from what you told me, unfortunately yes."

But by the late 1970's, remarried and coping with questions from her daughters, she begins listening to those who argue that Oswald was not acting alone. David Lifton (Robert Picardo), author of a book raising questions about the Kennedy autopsy, becomes Marina's mentor, assuring her that "you were bamboozled by experts, like the rest of us." By film's end, Marina is telling her daughters: "I learned the truth had been hidden. Your father was caught between powerful forces we still don't understand." And caught, it might be added, between speculations that can nei-

and Death

ther be proved nor disproved, even though Miss Bonham Carter and Mr. Whaley give chillingly persuasive performances.

In the exhaustive and fascinating "Frontline" portrait of Oswald, conspiracy theories are neither entirely dismissed nor eagerly embraced. A television team of investigators spent more than a year visiting several countries and finding, said a senior producer, Michael Sullivan, "hundreds of photographs, documents and other evidence." He adds, "The fall of the Soviet Union has allowed unprecedented access to former K.G.B. officers and other witnesses and documents."

What emerges overall is a case history of a nonentity with a talent for conniving and for popping up in the most unlikely places. Born in New Orleans in 1939, Oswald spent part of his youth in the Bronx, where he ended up in a youth detention center. A social worker remembers him vividly as being "emotionally frozen." Joining the Marines in 1957, he was assigned to a base housing the C.I.A.'s U-2 spy plane. He was court-martialed twice. Defecting to the Soviet Union and initially denied admittance, he appeared to attempt suicide in Moscow. Returning to the United States in 1962 with a wife and child, he was sorely disappointed when the press paid no attention.

Living in a world of aliases and frustrated ambitions, Oswald managed to establish contradictory connections, with Castro's Cuba and anti-Castro Cubans, with the K.G.B. and United States intelligence agencies, with the F.B.I. and organized crime, all of which provided fuel for later conspiracy theories. In his drab and sour private life, Oswald neglected



Alice S. Hall/NBC

Frank Whaley and Helena Bonham Carter in the television movie "Fatal Deception: Mrs. Lee Harvey Oswald," tonight on NBC.

and mistreated his family and lost three jobs in one year. On a furtive trip to Mexico City in 1963, he was turned down by both Cuba and Russia in applications for entry.

Interviewed for the documentary, Robert Oswald, one of Lee's two older brothers, who does believe he acted alone, says simply, "He toyed with people." Despite all the material

gathered, this documentary concedes that the question remains: Did he have help? As to why he chose as his target John F. Kennedy, whom he often professed to admire, viewers are told, "That question can only be answered by one young man, and his answer will always be silence." The rest, apparently, is endless speculation.